SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : Sir, I have already explained it. This question is being repeated. I have already answered it.

*362. [*The Questioner (Shri Santosh Kumar Sahu) was absent. For answer vide col. .....infra.*]

RELEASE OF BONDED LABOURERS

*363. SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) what are the minimum wages fixed for the agricultural labour state-wise;

(b) what are the details of the bonded labour released during the last three years, state-wise; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to ensure the payment of minimum wages to agricultural labour and to abolish the bonded labour system in future ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House

A list containing the latest available state-wise minimum rates of wages for the unskilled category of agriculture labour is annexed as Statement-I (*See* below). A list indicating the details of the Bonded labour released in various States during the year 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92 is annexed as Statement-II (*See* below).

Under the Minimum Wages Act, both Central as well as the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations are the "appropriate Governments" for fixation/reservation of the minimunm rates of wages for the "scheduled employments" undtr their respective spheres. The "appropriate Government" has enforcement machinery, to implement and enforce the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act and the rules made thereunder.

The Bonded Labour System has been abolished throughout the country with effect from 25th October, 1975 under Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. The Act mandates release of all the bonded labourers from bondage and simultaneous liquidation of their debts. The responsibility of implementing the Act rests with the State Governments concerned. Vigilance Committee at the District/Sub-Divisional level have been set-up to hasten the identification and rehabilitation of bonded labourers.

Statement-I

Sl. No.	States/UTs.	Minimum Wages for agricultural Workers
1	2	3
1	Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 16.80 to Rs 23.40 per day (according to Zones) (8.4.91)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Rs. 18.00 to Rs. 21.00 per day (According to Areas) (1-11-90)
3.	Assam	Rs. 978.00 p. m. or Rs. 828.00 p, m. plus food shelter and clothing (1-2-91)

1	2	3
4.	Bihar	Rs. 16.50 per day (16-10-90)
5.	Goa	Rs. 22.00 per day to Rs. 27.50 per day (5-2-92)
6.	Gujarat	Rs. 15.00 per day (1-8-90)
7.	Haryana	Rs. 31.75 *with meals or* Rs. 35.75 without meals (1-1-92)
8.	Himachal Pradesh	Rs. 22.00 per day (26-1-90)
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	Rs. 15.00 per day (24-3-89)
10.	Karnataka	Rs. 12.00 to Rs. 17.65 per day (12-7-88)
11.	Kerala	Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 40.20 per day (31-3-92)
12.	Madhya Pradesh	Rs 20.27 per day (1-10-91)
13.	Maharashtra	Rs. 12.00 to Rs. 20.00 per day (According to Zones) (1-5-88)
14.	Manipur	Rs. 26.70 per day for Hill areas & Rs. 23.70 per day for other than Hill areas. (1-12-88)
15.	Meghalaya	Rs. 25.00 per day (1-6-90)
16.	Mizoram	Rs. 28.00 per day (1-11-87)
17.	Nagaland	Rs. 25.00 per day (6-7-92)
18.	Orissa	Rs 25.00 per day (1-7-90)
19.	Punjab	Rs 40.23 without mealsor Rs. 36.23 with meals per day (1-3-92)
20.	Rajasthan	Rs. 22.00 per day (2-7-90)
21.	Sikkim	Rs. 17.00 per day (1-1-91)
22.	Tamil Nadu	Rs. 14.00 per day (3-4-89)
23	Tripura	Rs. 17.80 per day (1-10-90)

1	2	3
24.	Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 23.00 per day to Rs. 25.00 per day (7-1-92)
25.	West Bengal	Rs. 26.95 per day Rs. 23.75 per day plus two principle meals (1-10-91)
26.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Rs. 27.00 per day (Andaman) Rs. 28.00 per day (Nicobar) (13-8-92)
27.	Chandigarh	Rs. 36.23 per day with meal or Rs. 40.23 per day without meal (1-3-92)
28.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Rs. 14.00 per day (5-10-89)
29.	Delhi	Rs. 41.45 per day (1-2-93)
30.	Daman & Diu	Rs. 18.40 per day to Rs. 22.00 per day (7-2-91)
31.	Lakshadweep	Rs. 18.00 per day (1-9-88)
32.	*Pondicherry*	
	(i) Pondicherry Region	Rs. 14.00 per day (15-12-89)
	(ii) Mahe Region	Rs. 12.00 per day (12-2-87)
	(iii) Yanam Region	Rs. 11.00 per day (15-3-88)
	(iv) Karikal	Rs. 14.00 per day for adults (31-1-90)

Statement-II

Name of the States	Number of Bonded labourers Identified and Released.		
	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
1. Andhra Pradesh	—	1856	124
2. Bihar	104	33	—
3. Karnataka	249	5938	—
4. Madhya Pradesh	1323	317	80
5. Maharashtra	10	41	—
6. Orissa	1055	108	55
7. Rajasthan	47	126	56
8. Tamil Nadu	59	323	456
9. Uttar Pradesh	104	1230	—
10. Gujarat	—	—	—
11. Haryana	67	—	—
12. Kerala	—	—	—
Total	3018	9972	771

श्री राम नरेश यादव : महोदय, यह मेरा प्रश्न था कि न्यूनतम मजदूरी के बारे में बंधुआ मजदूरों के बारे में विशेष रूप से इस समय सबसे भयानक स्थिति है कृषक मजदूरों की । ये बेचारे गरीबी में जनमते-पलते हैं और मर जाते हैं । जब यह स्थिति है तो इस स्थिति से निपटने के लिए ही कुछ न्यूनतम मजदूरी मिलने के लिए कानून भी राज्य सरकारों ने बना दिया, उसका निर्धारण किया । इसी तरह से बाल बंधुआ मजदूर हैं । यह भी हमारे देश के लिए अभिशाप है । आज आजादी के इतने वर्षों बाद भी हमारी स्थिति में परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ है बल्कि आज भी बंधुआ मजदूरों का वैसे ही शोषण होता है । यह बहुत लज्जाजनक और शर्मनाक बात है । उसी आधार पर मैंने प्रश्न किया था कि जो न्यूनतम मजदूरी सरकारों ने तय की है और फिर जो हमारे बंधुआ मजदूर हैं उनकी जो स्थिति है उसको ध्यान में रखते हुए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि यह तो राज्य सरकारों का दायित्व है, लेकिन क्या आपने कभी केन्द्रीय स्तर पर इस बात पर विचार किया है या नहीं किया है कि यह जो न्यूनतम मजदूरी तय हुई है उसका पालन होता है या नहीं होता है ? यह बात तो निश्चित है कि किसी राज्य में जो न्यूनतम मजदूरी तय है वह मजदूरों को नहीं मिलती है और उसका परिणाम यह हो रहा है कि वे चारों तरफ गांव छोड़कर भाग रहे हैं और दिल्ली पर बोझ बढ़ रहा है और बम्बई पर बोझ बढ़ रहा है और बड़े-बड़े शहरों पर बोझ बढ़ रहा है यहां तक कि वे बेचारे झुग्गी-झोंपड़ियों में और फुटपाथों पर सोते हैं, यह स्थिति हो गई है । इसलिए इसको ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या मंत्री जी देश के इन श्रमिकों की स्थिति को ठीक करने के लिए जो न्यूनतम मजदूरी तय हुई है अगर वह नहीं मिल रही है तो क्या इसको ध्यान में रखते हुए केन्द्रीय स्तर पर कोई कमेटी बैठाकर या कोई मानिटरिंग सिस्टम बैठाकर इसको देखने की कोशिश की है या नहीं की है और उसका परिणाम क्या हुआ है और अगर ऐसा नहीं किया है तो क्या मंत्री जी इस बात पर गम्भीरता से विचार करके यह काम करेंगे ? यह मेरे प्रश्न का (अ) भाग एग्रीकल्चरल मजदूरों के बारे में है और (ब) में बंधुआ मजदूरों के बारे में पूछना चाहता हूं कि बंधुआ मजदूर अब तक कितनी आइडेंटिफाइ हो चुके हैं और कितनों को पुनर्स्थापित करने के लिए कदम उठाए जा चुके हैं और आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में आप इस संबंध में क्या करना चाहते हैं, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूं ।

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, it is true that there are a lot of difficulties in enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act. Thert are so many reasons for that. One of the reasons is that the workers are scattered all over the country and their number is very large. The National Commission on Rural Labour has estimated agricultural labour at 110 million. This is the reason why the State Governments find it difficult to implement it. Also the enforcement machinery is not adequate.

Thirdly, agricultural labourers are the most unorganised labour. They do not have any unions. As a result, they do not have any bargaining power. I have been appealing to the trade union leadership in this country that they have concentrated their activity enough in the organised sector, it is time for them to spread to the villages, organise the unorganised labour, particularly the agricultural labour. I am happy that some of the trade unions are taking interest now. Therefore, I must admit very frankly that the contention of the hon. Member is right that much needs to be done in that area.

Then comes the question of fixation of the minimum wages. Implementation is, of course, the second part of it. Minimum wages also vary from State to State. It is as low as Rs. 11 in some States and as high as 41 in some other States So, there is a vast difference. Of course, this matter has been discussed at many forums on many occasions. We are examining all the recommendations of various expert committees and I hope to come to the House with the proposals to amend the Minimum Wages Act. I would, however, not like to go into the details.

The second part is about the bonded labour. As the Member is aware, bonded labour has been abolished by an Ordinance on the 25th October, 1975. Since then the State Governments have reported that 2,50,289 bonded labourers have been identified in various parts of the country. Out of this 2,23,141 have already been rehabilitated. So, only 27,148 are left to be rehabilitated.

This is the figure furnished by various State Governmnts. According to the figures furnished by the State Governments only 27 thousand odd are left to be rehabilitated. The Central Government has been giving a lot of assistance to the State Governments for rehabilitation of bonded labour. Until today the centre has released about 35.18 crores to the State Governments for the purpose of rehabilitating bonded labour.

श्री राम नरेश यादव : मैंने जो प्रश्न किया था, मंत्री महोदय उसका जवाब दें दें, फिर दूसरा सप्लीमेन्टरी करूंगा । जिन बंधुआ मजदूरों की स्थिति आपने बताई, वे कितने बाकी रह गए हैं और आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में उनके बारे में क्या कर रहे हैं, यह मैंने जानकारी चाही है, जरा इसको बता दें ।

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, the responsibility of identifying and rehabilitating bonded labour lies with the State Governments. Now, for the purpose of rehabilitation we have a scheme where it is funded on a matching grant——50 : 50. As the State Governments go on rehabilitating the bonded labour, the Government of India keeps on releasing that money—50 per cent of it which is our share. So, much of the initiative has to come from the State Governments. As they go on, we can release money; there is no problem. I can assure the House, money should not be a problem for rehabilitating bonded labour.

Now, as far as specific provision for voluntary organizations—non—Governmental organizations—is concerned, we are involving them in a big way and we have made a provision of one crore of rupees during the Eighth Five-Year Plan for helping the voluntary organizations. During 1992-93 we have made a provision of Rs. 10 lakhs for them.

श्री राम नरेश यादव : महोदय, यह जो डा. सी. एस. हनुमंतराव की अध्यक्षता में राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण श्रमिक आयोग की स्थापना हुई थी, उसका भी मकसद यह था कि किस तरह से ग्रामीण श्रमिकों का जीवन स्तर सुधारने की संस्तुति की जाए । साथ ही साथ इसमें बंधुवा मजदूरों का भी मामला था । इसलिए मैं इसके आधार पर कहना चाहता हूं कि उन्होंने सिफारिश की थी और सिफारिश यह की थी, जब उन्होंने देखा कि इसका पालन ठीक ढंग से नहीं हो रहा है, जो भी हमारे देश के मजदूर इस तरह बंधुवा रूप में काम करते हैं, जिसमें इंसान, इन्सान के तरीके से नहीं रह पाता है तो इस स्थिति को ध्यान में रखकर उन्होंने यह सिफारिश की थी कि बंधुआ मजदूरों के लिए कानून आपने बना तो दिए लेकिन उन कानूनों का पालन नहीं हो रहा है । इसलिए उन्होंने इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए कि उनका पालन नहीं हो रहा है, एक राष्ट्रीय आयोग को नियुक्त करने की संस्तुति की थी जो वह देखे कि सचमुच में बंधुवा मजदूर, जो राष्ट्र के लिए कलंक बने हुए हैं, उनकी स्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह देखे कि उन कानूनों का पालन हो रहा है या नहीं हो रहा है । नहीं हो रहा है तो कौन लोग इसके लिए जिम्मेदार हैं । इसलिए जो उस आयोग ने यह संस्तुति की थी क्या उस पर सरकार विचार करेगी और विचार करके क्या उसे कार्यरूप में परिणत करेगी, यह मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir the National Commisison on Rural Labour has made a number of recommendations. As far as minimum wages are concerned, it has made three specific recommendations, which I would like to mention. (1) The minimum wages should not be below Rs. 20; they should be Rs. 20 all over the country. (2) The minimum wages must be linked to variable dearness allowance. (3) The minimum wages should be revised every two years. As of now, minimum wages

are revised after every five years. Now, the National Commission on Rural Labour has said that they should be revised every two years. So, these are the three main, specific recommendations regarding minimum wages.

As I have said, the Govt. is coming forward with a Bill to amend the Minimum Wages Act and, while finalizing the amendments--I have assured the House-- we will take all these recommendations into account. As far as bonded labour is concerned, the National Comission on Rural Labour has said that there should be a National Commission on Bonded Labour. That is one major recommendation that the National Commission on Rural Labour has made, and that is under the examination of the Government of India.

श्री शिव प्रसाद चनपुरिया : सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या न्यूनतम मजदूरी तय करने से पहले, इस क्षेत्र के किसानों की रोजाना आमदनी क्या है, इसको सुनिश्चित कर लिया गया है ? सभापति महोदय, मैं यह सवाल इसलिए कर रहा हूं क्योंकि मैं जानता हूं कि मध्य प्रदेश में बहुत से ऐसे किसान हैं, जिनकी आमदनी एक रुपया रोज भी नहीं पड़ रही है और उस हिसाब से शासन को चाहिए कि पहले किसानों की आय सुनिश्चित करे कि उनकी कितनी आय होती है और मजदूरी देने के बाद उन्हें क्या बचता है ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, actually, the concept of minimum wages is still being debated. What should be the basis on which the minimum wages shou'd be fixed? When the Act was enacted, I think, the concept that was taken, was on the basis of sustenance, subsistence, level, perhaps, and possibly subsistence allowance. That was the thing. But a debate has been going on that the minimum wages should be fixed on the basis of the calories required, that the number of members in a family, that is, five per family, should be taken into account, that it is not only food that should be taken into account but even clothing, medicine, health and other things should also be taken into account. All this debate is going on. I must say frankly that no definite conclusion has been arrived at so far. May be, we are not in a position to arrive at a decision on how the minimum wages should be fixed. The National Commission on Rural Labour has gone into all these aspects, and ultimately it came to the conclusion that it shou'd be Rs. 80. Mr. Narayanasamy is a party to this decision. This recommendation of Rs. 20 has been accepted by the Conference of the Labour Ministers in August last year, that is, 1992. As I said, We have already issued directives to the State Governments that the minimum wages should be fixed at Rs. 20 or above. While bringing an amendment, I can assure the House that we will make Rs. 20 compulsory. Of course, today's Rs. 20/-, *I think, after one year, will be irrelevant.* Therefore, it is vcery difficult to fix the amount as such. It needs to be revised. That is why we are providing that, number one, it should be revised after every two years, and, number two, it must be linked with variable dearness allowance. I think that will keep.....

श्री शिव प्रसाद चनपुरिया : सभापति जी, मेरे प्रश्न का उत्तर नहीं दिया गया । मैंने पूछा था कि किसान की प्रतिदिन आमदनी क्या होती है, उसे आधार बनाकर क्या मजदूरी तय की गई है ? इसका उत्तर नहीं आया है ।

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned categorically about fixation of the minimum wages. The whole problem of minimum wages not being paid to the agricultural labourers is a fact of life. In various States the Minimum Wages Act is not being implemented in its full term. As far as the agricultural sector is concerned, the poor agricultural labourer is being exploited by big landlords. The hon. Minister says that the job of the Central Government is over as soon as they bring in an enactment and that the Central Government leaves it to the State Governments to implement it. The Central Government is a coordinating agency. The responsibility of the Central Government is much more than that of the State Governments for the implementation of the Act. Even today there are a lot of complaints being received by the Labour Ministry, that even the fixed minimum wages, which were fixed about 10, 15

years back, are not paid to the labour. The Minister called the Labour Ministers of various States. He held discussions with them. They were saying that they were implementing the Act, but in the field it is not so. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister and the Central Government, what steps the Central Government, as a monitoring agency and as a coordinating agency, is going to take for strict implementation of the Minimum Wages Act in the country.

As far as the bonded labour is concerned, Karnataka has the largest number of bonded laboures as on today. Next comes Andhra Pradesh. These are facts. Even today in Andhra Pradesh... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA : Is he putting a question or giving information ?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : I am coming to it, Sir.

Right under the nose of the hon. Minister, in Delhi, in quarries the bonded labour system is there, bonded labourers are there. It is being highlighted in press every day. Therefore, for abolition of the system of bonded labour, in spite of the fact that the Act was brought in 1976 nothing much has been done for the purpose of rehabilitating these bonded labourers and also for freeing the bonded labourers who are in the clutches of big landlords.

Merely calling the Labour Ministers and discussing with them is not going to solve the problem. Since the Central Government is a monitoring agency, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what the Central Government is going to do in this matter ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, the hon. Member has himself given the answer. Our job is to monitor and coordinate. Section (a) of the Minimum Wages Act contemplates that there shall be a Central Advisory Board. We have that Central Advisory Board. These matters are discussed in that Board. Certain decisions are taken in that Board and the decisions taken in that Board or in the Ministry or in the Labour Ministers' conference are recommendatory in nature and the responsibility of implementation of the Act lies with the State Government. So we cannot force them. It is only suggestion or a recommendation, we make from time to time.

Now, I can speak from my personal experience that there are States who are reluctant to increase the minimum wages; and they have their own reasons. For example, Maharashtra has got a scheme called Employment Guarantee Scheme. They give employment to everybody.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : That means, there are not bonded labourers in Maharashtra

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I am talking about the Minimum Wages Act. You have not understood my point. Therefore, the question is whether to increase the minimum wages and limit the number of people to whom you can give employment or you don't insist on minimum wages and pay a lesser rate to more people. This is a very, very valid point from the point of view of the State Government. Therefore, we have to take into account all the practical difficulties that are being faced by the respectvie State Governments. However, we are trying to bring uniformity in the minimum wages to be paid in the country. As I said earlier, all the suggestions will be taken into account when we come with amendments to the Act.

As far as bonded labourers are concerned...

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Sir, I am on a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is Question Hour, no point of order.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I have never misled the House. If I do not know something I will admit that I do not know something. So I don't mislead the House. What I am saying here is a fact. As far as bonded labourers are concrened, according to the figures furnished by the State Governments, only 27,000 are left now. I will explain it a little further. Today, no

State Government is willing—to be frank—to admit that there are bonded labourers in their States. This is one problem.

The second problem, of course, has come now. The Supreme Court in its recent ruling has gone into the interpretation of the definition of "Who is a bonded labourer?" Originally, the definition of a bonded labourer was a person who was forced to work because he was indebted a certain amount of money to his employer. That was the thing. Now the Supreme Court has come out with an interpretation that whoever is paid below a minimum wage fixed by the State Government is a bonded labourer. Therefore, the definition of bonded labourer has been expanded by the recent ruling of the Supreme Court. If you take the latest interpretation of the Supreme Court, then, the number of bonded labourers will naturally increase. It will be so big, I really do not know how to deal with them further. As I said earlier, all these things are under the examination of the Government. Ultimately when we come with amendments to the Act, we will take these suggestions into account.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister is taking too much time to reply to simple questions. Sir, the point is that minimum wages vary from State to State. There is a difference. He says that the Central Government is only a monitoring agency, coordinating agency without the responsibility of enforcing the Act. He has drawn a parallel between the Employment Guarantee Scheme in Maharashtra and the minimum wages paid to bonded labourers. He has linked together these two things. These two are entirely different things. The enforcement of minimum wages for bonded labourers has nothing to do with the Employment Guarantee Scheme. I do not know why he has linked these two things. My main question is this. Now, the Central Government is a monitoring and coordinating agency. According to him, it appears that in various States, the Minimum Wages Act has not been implemented. It is time for the Central Government to rethink whether the implementation, enforcement of minimum wage, in the different States, should be made mandatory on the part of the State Governments. Whatever the minimum wage they decide whether it is Rs. 20/- or Rs. 25/- or Rs. 30/-, will it become mandatory for the State Governments to implement it? Otherwise, coming up with a minimum wage and not implementing it, is something illusory, hypocritical, on the part of the State Governments and it will be a deception for the agricultural labourers. How long will the Central Government remain a spectator? There is lack of political will on the part of the various State Governments. The landlord lobby is so powerful in many States that the Land Ceiling Act has not been implemented there and large concentrations of land are there in individual hands and they are standing in the way of implementing this agricultural minimum wage. That is why I feel that the Central Government should step in without eroding the power of the State Governments. I stand for the power of the State Governments. Without eroding the power of the States, since this is a question of agricultural labourers, will the Central Government think of the matter in terms of making it mandatory for the State Governments to enforce minimum wages to agricultural labourers?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I think the hon. Member is correct. Technically, I will concede that point. The appropriate Government for implementation of the Minimum Wages Act is the Central Government as far as the Central sector is concerned. Anyway, I am not shifting the entire responsibility to the Central Government. It is very limited. The Central Government is the appropriate authority only in terms of the agricultural farms in Central Universities, the agricultural farms managed by the Defence Ministry and research institutions. It is very limited. As far as that area is concerned, the minimum wage fixed by the Central Government is Rs. 40/- or Rs. 41/-. It is the highest, in fact, compared to the Rs. 11/- or Rs. 12/- in some States. So, wherever the Central Government is the appropriate Government, we have fixed the minimum wage at Rs. 41/-. I think that takes care of your doubt about my previous remark.

The second part says that the Central Government cannot remain merely a spectator or a monitoring authority. Well, Sir, these matters were discussed on the floor of this House when the House was discussing the report of the National Commission on Rural Labour. In that debate on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour, there was unanimity in this House that there must be a Central legislation for the agricultural workers covering two aspects. One is settlement of their disputes and enforcement of their rights. The second part of it is to have a social security measure for them. These two points unanimously emerged in this very House. And, the debate is on in the other House. I think it comes up there next Friday on a Private Member's Bill. An opinion is emerging unanimously even in the Lok Sabha. I can assure the House that we will honour the unanimous opinions of both the Houses of Parliament and the Government will come forward with a proposal for a Central legislation.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL : The hon. Minister has said that the agricultural labour in this country is 110 million. He has also said that because of the lack of organisation and trade unions, they have no bargaining power. He has also conceded that the role of the Government, the Central Government, is advisory. In view of all these difficulties, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in the Labour Ministers' Conferences, they have really tried to sell the idea of making labour a Concurrent subject so that the decision of the Central Government does not remain only an advice but becomes enforceable through legislation.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, his particular point has not been discussed. Actually it is a very sensitive subject. I do not know whether it will be discussed at all. Anyway, as far as minimum wages and bonded labour are concerned, the Labour Conferences have been discussing them. For example, the 37th Labour Ministers' Conference of 1988 had discussed this issue threadbare. Earlier to that, the 31st Labour Ministers' Conference of 1980, the 36th Labour Ministers' Conference of 1987 and the August 1992 Labour Ministers' Conference, all the four Labour Ministers' Conferences have gone into this issue in depth. Besides this, we have the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour before us and as such, the Government is going into all the recommendations of these conferences, expert committees and commissions and proposing to come forward with an amendment to the Act. Beyond, that, I cannot say anything.

*364. [*The Questioners (Shri V. Hanumantha Rao and Dr. Sanjaya Sinh) were absent. For answer* vide col.....infra.]

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU : Sir, I was to ask a very important question in respect of a neglected tribal area.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I would like to go on with the Question Hour because we are taking up very few questions, which is unfair to the House.

(Hon. Member absent)

*36. [*The Questioner (Choudhary Hormohan Singh) was absent. For answer* vide col.....infra.]

Decline in Export of Oilseeds

*366. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is heavy decline in the export of oilseeds due to the use of banned insecticides in the country;

(b) what is the percentage of decrease in export registered since last three years, till date; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Govt. to boost its export ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.